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Department of Agriculture

LIVING AT HOME STIMULATES NATIONAL RECOVERY

A radio talk by Mrs. Ola Powell Malcolm, Extension Service, on March 21, 1934 in the Land-Grant College Program, National Farm and Home Hour, over a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations.

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Living on a low income became fashionable during the depression. Now that plans for recovery are progressing, there is still need for the sound plan of utilizing for home use the products that the farm normally produces. Many thousands of families have manifested much interest in all the varied problems involved. The pride they have shown in the results obtained has been a help in spreading the influence of their success to other families. Extra hours of leisure and much time that might otherwise have been unemployed have been directed into more profitable channels resulting in improvement of homes and better living. Home demonstration agents understand thoroughly the importance of helping people to help themselves, by utilizing to good advantage what they have at hand. This plan has contributed much toward keeping up the morale of large numbers of persons who were actually in distress or greatly depressed because of unemployment.

This situation furnished new opportunity to extension agents, whose job it is to help farm families to readjust their agriculture in order to obtain a more abundant living and greater satisfaction on the farm and in the farm home. More demonstrations and practical teaching are needed now than ever before. Because, after all, those farm families that do all they can for themselves will get the best proportionate returns from any movement for improving conditions. Extension agents have succeeded in getting large numbers of persons to put their best into doing something directed toward self-help and self-improvement. Through these plans there has been much accomplished that is worth while, not only in the results obtained, but by the individuals who have undertaken to learn to do by doing. As we enlist more families to actually take a hand in the work of producing, preserving, and preparing the family living at home and of improving their surroundings, we are gaining ground, and time too, in securing independence for American people.

It is a known fact that if all food is bought, it costs an average family of five about \$600 per year, if each member is properly nourished. Farm families following a live-at-home plan furnished by extension agents have actually demonstrated how to provide a good living at home which amounts in value to around \$547, leaving a balance of about \$63 with which to purchase grocery items like salt, baking powder, coffee, spices, extracts, sugar and other supplies. Every farm family that produces a liberal food supply adds to the family income by saving expenditures for food, and also provides greater satisfaction in the farm living and protects the family health. Many families already know from experience how to balance the production of the needed varieties of food. Literally hundreds of thousands of farm women and girls have learned to figure their yearly food requirements. For instance, in figuring the food needs for a family of five for the year, these women and girls have found that a healthful food budget should include the products from a well-planned 1/2 acre garden, 1/2 acre

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orchard, 2 meat hogs, a flock of 50 hens, 1 beef animal, 4 milk cows and, if desired, a few sheep and Belgian hares, 2 acres of sweetpotatoes, melons, cane for sirup, and field peas.

The farm or ranch family that plans, can produce practically all of a fully adequate diet. In addition, provision is often made to include in the farm pantry, an extra store of peanuts, popcorn, sorghum, fruits, pumpkins, and canned chicken to help in adding pleasure to home-made recreation, which has been gaining in popularity during the past few years.

Increasing numbers of farm homes have become better places in which to live, and actual improvement in the standards of living have been brought about during the depression years as a result of the work of home demonstration agents. These improvements have been accomplished, first, by well-filled home pantries and smoke-houses which have been stored with home-produced supplies, and second, through home improvements which have added comforts for the entire family. More comfort in sleeping rooms in the South has resulted from the interest farm women and girls have manifested in learning to make cotton mattresses at home using cotton grown in their own patches. The making of cotton mattresses has, in many places, been an important part of the home-improvement work carried on under the direction of home demonstration agents. In all, about 9,000 cotton mattresses have been made during the last 2 years by farm women and girls in their better-bedroom work. To the rural people who made them, these mattresses have meant a saving of many thousands of dollars and a keener appreciation of the value of good bedding. Few, if any, of the persons making these mattresses could have purchased now bedding, so the situation was to do without better beds or learn how to provide greater comfort from the surplus cotton on hand.

The tried and time-worn saying that necessity is the mother of invention is just as true today as it ever was. In a great many instances, the lessons learned are worth what they have cost if we will continue in use what has proved to be most helpful. If we will but do this we may grasp the opportunity to lay the foundation for better homes, better living, better children, and a better citizenship throughout the United States which the new plan for agriculture offers. One of the most important results already realized in working out these new plans for agriculture is, that the largest numbers of persons who understand the reasons why controlled production of agricultural products is necessary, are learning more about their Government and its operation and the real business of good farming.